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13 December 1963**MEMORANDUM****SUBJECT: Analysis of World Reaction to President Kennedy's Assassination****A. The USSR**

1. Since the assassination of President Kennedy, Soviet leaders have refrained from taking any actions which the US and the rest of the world could interpret as calculated to embarrass the US. Soviet interest in maintaining the atmosphere of detente created by the nuclear test ban treaty was demonstrated by the appointment of Mikoyan to represent the USSR at President Kennedy's funeral. He is close to Khrushchev and personally acquainted with many high-level US officials and participated in the settlement of the Cuban missile crisis last fall. Moscow has consistently presented that settlement as the epitome of peaceful coexistence in action.

2. Soviet leaders were apparently as profoundly moved and shocked by the slaying of President Kennedy as were the leaders of America's closest allies. In addition to his formal message of condolence, Khrushchev personally visited the US Embassy. He recalled to the Ambassador that Lenin had condemned "nihilist" activities and asserted that the Soviet Communist Party is traditionally opposed to terrorism. Madame Khrushcheva also visited the embassy and referred warmly to her memories of the Vienna meeting with the Kennedys. She said her family, and indeed, all Soviet citizens she knows, were "shaken" by the tragedy. The Danish foreign minister, who was in Moscow at the time of the assassination, reported that Gromyko seemed visibly moved by the news. The US Embassy was impressed by the apparently genuine and deep reaction of concern, grief, and sympathy among the Soviet people over the President's death. Several

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embassy members, as well as other Americans in Moscow, were stopped in the street by Soviet citizens wishing to express sympathy, and American students at the university reported that a number of their Soviet colleagues were in tears.

3. Soviet Government leaders in their official statements and messages carefully avoided any attempt to assess the blame for what they termed the "heinous" slaying of President Kennedy. The Soviet propaganda line, on the other hand, which was peddled with great force and a show of moral indignation to the Soviet public by the press, radio and television, was that the assassination was the work of "ultra rightists" in the US and that the killing of Lee Oswald was an attempt by the "ultras" to wipe out the tracks. Prior to Oswald's murder, Moscow reflected sensitivity over his Marxist affiliation. Soviet media charged that American right-wingers were trying to use the assassination of President Kennedy to stir up anti-Soviet and anti-Cuban hysteria. Moscow subsequently went to great lengths to detail the US Communist Party's denial that Oswald was ever a member of the Party and even took note of US press reports linking him with Trotskyite movements. Moscow also noted that he was denied Soviet citizenship while in the USSR, but did not report that the Soviet Embassy in Washington turned over a consular file on Oswald to US officials.

4. Soviet propaganda thus attempted to defend the Soviet Government and the Communist movement in general from any link with the assassination. It did, however, present the tragedy to confirm and deepen the impression of US life which it has been portraying to the Soviet public for over a year--the impression that the US is in the grips of a deep social and moral crisis, with a massive rightist plot moving towards power.

#### B. Communist China

1. Peiping promptly reported the assassination of President Kennedy, but unlike Moscow did not comment at length on the tragedy or on the suspected assassin. The late President was one of Peiping's favorite propaganda targets as an alleged "warmonger," and the Chinese Communists had devoted considerable effort to denouncing Khrushchev for his "naive"

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association with President Kennedy. Reflecting Peiping's vicious anti-US attitude and its disregard for common decency, one paper printed a gruesome cartoon on the assassination of President Kennedy.

2. Chinese Communist delegates to meetings outside of China took issue with expressions of sorrow over the President's death on the part of other delegates. At Conakry, Guinea, a Chinese Communist delegation to a conference of Afro-Asian lawyers walked out of the hall on 23 November when the chairman asked members to stand for one minute in silent tribute to the slain President. The Chinese returned to the meeting only after the tribute. At a subsequent session of the World Peace Council in Warsaw, Peiping delegates fought their way to the rostrum and over vehement objections of the chairman denounced other participants for lauding the assassinated President.

3. Peiping has found it easy to switch its attacks from President Kennedy to President Johnson. The Chinese Communist press has portrayed the new President as a "rich millionaire" who "represents the interests of big oilmen and ranchers in the south and big capitalists and industrialists in the north." Peiping noted that Johnson "has given positive support to all Kennedy's reactionary policies in whose making and projection he participated."

#### C. Cuba

1. Cuban reaction to the President's killing and the aftermath has reflected more sensitivity and apprehension than any other regime in the world. Havana comment, highlighted by off-the-cuff speeches of Castro and "Che" Guevara, has stressed that a new, tougher policy against Cuba would be forthcoming from the US.

2. In his speech of 27 November, Castro went into elaborate detail in an attempt to prove what he had stated in his earlier speech of 24 November--that President Kennedy died at the instigation, if not by the hand, of "ultrareactionaries" in the US. Cuban press and radio comment on the assassination has elaborated Castro's theme by stressing "evidence" that the same reactionaries in the US who criticized

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President Kennedy's Cuban policy as too weak were responsible for murdering him. The 28 November Venezuelan statement on the arms cache of alleged Cuban origin found in Venezuela has been linked in Cuban propaganda with the Kennedy assassination as another move paving the way for more direct action against Cuba. Cuban comment on both events has suggested an elaborate reactionary plot in the US in which all evidence of the "true origin" of the assassination is being covered up. Allen Dulles' presence on the Warren Commission is being cited as "evidence" to prove this charge.

#### D. Other Communist Countries

1. East European Communist media, with the exception of Albania, closely followed Moscow's effort to lay responsibility for the assassination of President Kennedy at the door of America's radical right wing. Repeatedly referring to previous extremists' excesses, Communist propaganda organs in East Europe suggested that the rightists, in their impotence to reverse President Kennedy's liberal policies, have now resorted to "political terror" to gain their ends.

2. The Albanian press used the assassination to denounce US imperialism as well as Khrushchev and other "revisionists." Tirana said that the new praise which Khrushchev and modern revisionists are now giving to Kennedy's imperialist and aggressive policy, which Johnson intends to continue, shows that they have decided to follow their line of "capitulationism" and to collaborate and compromise with imperialism.

3. North Vietnam and North Korea have attributed the assassination to US political struggles. The Hanoi party newspaper attacked "revisionists" who have "expressed sorrow at the loss of a bellicose ringleader of imperialism." The paper judged the President's death to be the result of a power struggle. It stated that "seeing that the measures taken by Kennedy yielded nothing for financiers but only benefited the Kennedy group, his opponents did not hesitate to shoot him down."

#### E. The NonCommunist World

1. In Western Europe the press expressed strong doubts that the assassination of the President and the subsequent murder of his accused assassin were individual acts of two maniacs. Numerous stories advanced the

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theory that the two killings were in fact part of some plot. There was a general atmosphere of suspicion and disbelief and overwhelming criticism of the police performance in Dallas.

2. Press reports available from Africa showed heavy emphasis on the racist theme. The contention was voiced that the President was shot because of his civil rights stand.

3. Middle East commentaries attributed the assassination to Zionism. One Cairo newspaper noted that Oswald's killer was "one Jack Rubenstein, a Jew of course."

4. Some observers in Nationalist China and Latin America saw a Communist plot, but these reports were not numerous.

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